

# EXTREMES RAMPANT IN FASHION'S SPRING WARDROBE

Distended Skirts and Bunchy Hips Stick in the Memory of Casual Observer to Exclusion of the Conservative

By ELEANOR HOYT BRAINERD.

"WELL," said the visiting dressmaker, after keen-eyed examination of a large collection of imported model dresses, "they are a good deal the same—only more so."

That sums up the situation neatly enough, only not all of the new models are "more so." A certain percentage are perceptibly longer of skirt and not all are wide of hip and hooped of skirt.

Still, the general impression left by a survey of the fashion field is one of distended skirts and bunchy outlines. Extremes strike the vision more forcibly than things conservative and linger more definitely in the memory. One remembers the Premet models more clearly than the Drecoll.

They are uncompromising, those Premet models. Many of them are cleverly designed, tremendously interesting in detail, but royally regardless of the ordinary woman's limitations. "If you can't wear Premet models successfully, then wear something else," is the challenge flung out by the house, and in spite of the aggressive hip width, the bouffant skirt draping, the big sleeves, the amazing collars, those models are finding ready sale. Probably copies of them will be made, a bit to meet individual needs, but there is always a crowd that adores extremes and will have them whether they are becoming or not.

"It's this way," said a Western woman who makes clothes for the moneyed contingent in a large town. "I've never done a bigger business than I have this year, and I've never had a harder time in satisfying my customers. The girls are all right. They come in and pick up the fullest and bounciest and shortest model in the shop and say, 'Isn't this too daring?' I must have one like this, only a little fuller and a little shorter."

"But most women don't like the clothes and don't like themselves in them after they get them. They know they don't look well in this year's dresses, but they don't struggle much. It's the husbands that make trouble for me. They don't like the styles now, and you can say what you please about suffrage and parasites, but it does upset almost any woman to have her husband tell her she looks like a fright in a brand new, expensive dress."

Perhaps organized effort, concerted action on the part of husbands, would accomplish a fashion revolution, but individual criticism doesn't seem to have stemmed the flood, and the men may get used to hoops and hip draperies. Presumably there were women of all shapes and kinds in the days of Louis Seize and of Victoria and all were the frocks of one period; and if tradition be true, men were even more salient then than now. Those were the good old days when, according to anti-suffrage report, men regarded women as queens and knelt before their thrones.

Cheer up, Mesdames. Husbands may be become reconciled to 1916 modes, may even work up enthusiasm for them.

Evening dresses show Louis Seize influences rather more plainly than the models for daytime wear. They lend themselves more readily to Watteau and Boucher and Fragonard and Nattier effects, while the street dresses and afternoon dresses take on more of the 1830 characteristics, though only in a very general way have the designers clung to period ideas at all. There is a certain very elastic agreement as to the influence that is to prevail in the season. That is all. Each designer makes what he will of the theme.

The predominance of black and blue, the general use of black lace, the popularity of taffeta and grosgrain silks, the clever skirt stiffening devices, the increased size and fresh-

ness of sleeves and the importance of capes and collars are perhaps the points about the daytime costumes and dresses that impress one most in a cursory examination of the imported models.

Beige and all the kindred shadings and dove gray appear very often, and many brighter colors are used for relief of sombre and neutral hues, but every second street or afternoon model seems to be black or blue, and even the gray and beige colorings are very likely to be combined with dark blue. Some of the smartest models shown are illustrative of this last idea.

Georgette offers a clever little street coat frock whose picture is given in our large sketch and whose snugly fitted little short peplumed bodice is of the slightly greenish beige called, on the color cards, "corn stalk." The material of the beige coat is fine French serge and it is very slightly embroidered in black and girdled with narrow black taffeta.

This coat tops an extremely full, flaring skirt of black taffeta whose back has a separate bustle drapery caught up to the back of the little coat. There are little pockets embroidered and buttoned in beige and rather short sleeves whose little frills are faced with black taffeta rolled back on the inner side and buttoned to the body of the cuff.

A chic little dress this, and as dresses go today quite conservative. In comparison with the Premet model of navy serge, whose picture appears side by side with that of the Georgette model, the latter looks even demure.

This dark blue Premet is fairly characteristic, but in a black and white sketch preserves only its very radical extremes of line and reveals none of the clever handling of color in the collar lining, whose blue and green striped silk is narrowly bordered by a vivid blocked band in red and yellow and purple and other gay but skilfully harmonized colors. There is brilliant color too in the big tassels and the ornament holding the hip drapery and a touch of it upon the very large short sleeves.

This collar is a specialty of Premet's this spring, though it has been used before and in modified form is used by several other houses.

The short, big puffy sleeve is much liked by Premet too, but there is a leaning toward such extravagance by all the designers who favor 1839 lines. The result, combined with hip draperies and big capelike or swathing collars, is undeniably clumsy and the outline given to the ordinary figure is appalling.

Capelike and cape collars dissociated from extreme puffness of sleeve and skirt drapery are responsible for some exceedingly successful effects and in one form or another appear upon some of the models of practically all the houses.

Paquin, whose frocks are in large measure prone to long shoulders and big sleeves and other Victorian features, though she is not given over unreservedly to hip width, has used the cape and cape collar in many ways and sometimes with pronounced success. A model from this house which has caught the fancy of a goodly number of American buyers is of sheer white organza embroidered very lightly in tiny blue beads—just fine lines of the beads or tiny bead dots scattered over the bottom of the very full skirt and over the long mutton leg sleeves.

The simple little bodice has the narrowest of peplum frills, bead bordered, the narrow belt of organza has a line of beads at each edge, a spray of blue flowers trims the belt, but the striking feature of the dress is the big cape cover of deep blue velvet which hides most of the sheer bodice, reaching to the waist in front and back. A high

rolling collar of the organza, beaded, rises above the cape top at back and sides.

Then there is the effective cape upon a Drecoll street frock of beige serge, a model that succeeds in being extremely chic without being bizarre.

The one piece frock of serge, simply full in skirt but with no excesses of bunchiness or outline, has cleverly placed, three faced embroidered bits to relieve its neutral tone and from the shoulders in the back falls a graceful short cape which can be removed altogether by unbuttoning it from the shoulders or can be made a real protection by drawing it forward to fasten in front and let it smoothly over the shoulders.

Georgette has a double cape collar on one of her models. Both collars

and just in front of the arms, and in the back the upper collar runs straight around. The lower covers shoulders and sleeve tops in capelike fashion, but then merges into a redingote back, being cut in one with this full length, slightly fitted back.

Bondage to Grand on a good looking trotting frock of dark blue serge has one of the smartest cape collars shown, a deep, square cornered affair of dark serge cut in one with front bodice. It ends at the shoulders, leaving the fate of the front to the bodice, and it has a skilful little

touch of drapery at each shoulder line that gives it grace without clumsiness. Dark blue chiffon and Georgette crepe are used as freely as dark blue taffeta and serge and gabardine, and the combinations of the thick and thin blues are numberless. Several houses too have experimented very successfully with flared chiffons or Georgette crepe, in blue and white made over white but with trimming of plain dark blue taffeta or grosgrain.

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Abb. E. Underwood:

Biscuit serge jacket with a black taffeta skirt by Georgette and a blue gabardine gown by Premet.

"Isn't This Too Daring?" Ask the Feminine Buyers, but the Daring Things Are Going Fast Just the Same

each side to show a full underskirt of dark blue chiffon polka dotted largely in white. This skirt looks demure enough at first glance, but when the front and back sections of gabardine fall apart the polka dotted chiffon billows out in voluminous folds.

There are delightfully practical and attractive afternoon dresses of dark blue chiffon or Georgette over blue silk, embroidered very lightly but effectively in black or dark blue and lightened only by cream net about the neck and some little dashes of bright colored narrow ribbon applied where they will be most consummately successful.

Navy blue voile has been used too, much as are the sheerer stuffs in combination with taffeta or grosgrain. Klein shows a very pretty dark blue voile embroidered in blue and made over beige taffeta. The entire bodice is of beige crepe Georgette, but there is a big cape collar of the blue voile covering the whole back of the bodice and embroidered in beige.

All this talk of embroidery may give a wrong impression of lavish trimming, but it must be remembered that most of the embroidery is mere fine tracery in lines and delicate motifs.

Appropos of dark blue frocks and

suits embroidered, some of the best French houses are applying the embroidery of bronze gold to their dark blue silk and chiffon and serge, a shade of gold quite different from those so long and so generally in use.

A silk grenadine is another material that enters into a number of the dark blue and black dresses as a variation from chiffon and crepe Georgette.

Martial Armand and Drecoll both have good models built up of black grenadine and black taffeta embroidered sparingly in bright jet, and more serviceable materials for a cool, dark summer dress it would be hard to imagine, though the grenadine has not quite the charm of the chiffon and crepe.

Another material for which Drecoll stands sponsor, backed, however, by two other houses, is alpaca. When it comes to a question of service here a serviceable material is asked, and one or two of the models in it do show smartness, particularly a trim street costume of black alpaca whose buttonholes are bound in white taffeta. There is a very little white embroidery too, mere tailored stitchery in heavy white silk about buttons and pockets, etc., and the buttons are black and white bone.

## THE HOME WORK PROBLEM OF THE SCHOOL CHILDREN

"YES, I do think the conditions under which a child studies at home have much to do with his success." The speaker is the mother of three children, who, according to their teachers, always know their lessons. "It is true I didn't always hold such an opinion. Because I was slow in discovering this simple fact our elder son will not graduate from the high school until he is 18.

"Many principals of New York private schools agree that home study is necessary. My husband and I have always agreed about that, and from the time our children began to go to school we made them do some studying at home. At first the period was not longer than fifteen minutes, late in the afternoon before dinner. As they grew older I lengthened this study period gradually to an hour before dinner and as much after dinner as was necessary for them to learn their lessons."

"Was getting your elder son to study at home always a problem?" she was asked.

She pursed up her lips and frowned, and she shook her head.

"That's the reason I blame myself for his failing two years to make his grade for promotion." Dark blue chiffon and Georgette crepe are used as freely as dark blue taffeta and serge and gabardine, and the combinations of the thick and thin blues are numberless. Several houses too have experimented very successfully with flared chiffons or Georgette crepe, in blue and white made over white but with trimming of plain dark blue taffeta or grosgrain.

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At present, when our son is preparing for college, he requires him to go to bed at 10.

"It has always been the rule for them to study Monday's lessons on Friday evening, leaving both Saturday and Sunday entirely free. As the children grow older and want to refresh their minds about their Monday's work they have to get up early and study before breakfast. I don't believe either of them was originally fond of study, but their father drilled the habit in them until their ambition was awakened."

"At first he helped them over the rough places. Now, though, we still sit in the room adjoining the children's study with the door between open, he is seldom called on for an explanation or assistance of any sort."

The principal of a well known private school was asked about the advantages of home study. She said:

"Why not take the cases of some of those pupils who we know never study at home. We as teachers would be glad to get the point of view of the parents. Take Mary Snow. Of course that is not her real name. She is the daughter of well to do parents of some social prominence. She never knows her lessons, never studies at home and it is next to impossible to hold her attention long enough for her to learn very much in school."

"If it were not that she is natural bright girl it would be impossible for us to keep her. To be sure, her mother's point of view would be highly interesting."

When Mrs. Snow was asked if she believed in home study for school children she did not try to disguise her impatience.

"Any of my daughter's teachers could have answered that," she replied. "They are continually sending me notes, urging me to make Mary prepare her lessons at home. 'Why should I even if I had the time when I pay them to do it?'"

"Neither her dancing teacher, nor her riding master, nor her piano instructor urges her to work at home. They know that all her time is taken up with other things, and they say that she is a very good dancer, and that she dances at other times, and that her father has given her a horse, she rides every day, besides riding lessons."

"If her teachers wish her to continue her work in books at home, they should make the books attractive to her. That is the great fault of teaching these days—I mean teaching in books. The teachers not only make the work in school unattractive, but they do not choose appropriate books."

A second teacher, whose child is the honor pupil to have advanced even for one recitation, said, "I do believe in the home study."

"I do believe in the home study," she said. "But for strong minded children whose pleasure in learning is not too severely taxed by the study periods, I am not sure that it is not one of the best things."

"Though he looks robust, there is far from it. Fifteen minutes doors is all he can stand. After he begins to grow nervous and kept in he becomes almost ill."

Reminded of her own work at school, she said:

"I'm glad they told you that at school," she said. "You know I am proud of his work, and I really am the whole time. They admit that. At first we thought it might be his eyes that were giving trouble, but it is not that."

course there is nothing to be done, stomach trouble as a rule, and some day when he is strong and well he will be able to hard and catch up with the work he has promised me."

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A pretty colored gabardine dress cape and a blue gabardine gown by Rondeau Legrand.

A voile dress with a velvet cape by Paquin and a taffeta and lace dress by Drecoll.

